

Cross W-whyres

Sober Adventures part 6: Malaise, Caroline's memorial, a housewarming

How to relax and get loose without the booze

Life as sociological field work, minus the work?

Here you go

The Malaise

I feel that my life does not have as much meaning as I would like. My purpose is basically to keep myself alive and healthy everyday so I can avoid pain for myself and others and have minor enjoyments like cups of tea and youtube videos. My social role feels like mainly that of a conserver of the existing order of things and a consumer of basic goods and health services.

I do partake in music shows and write zines, but they have unclear social value (some positive, some negative social effect, with definite risk) and do not sustain emotional and social energy as perhaps a hobby and community like surfers seem to have might. Perhaps small parts of my everyday life might contribute to social progress, such as my personal aesthetic, speech or online activity suggesting or role modelling an alternative way of feeling, perceiving and acting to an onlooker or person I interact with, enabling discovery of more authentic or ethical existence.

Perhaps this should be enough to give life meaning and purpose, but I feel like I have stagnated aesthetically and do not go anywhere new, where I feel my presence would be relevant to anybody.

There is, of course, interaction with family and long term friends which should be enough to give life meaning and purpose and doesn't require social progress, but they are not enough, because I feel and perceive reasons why social progress must occur, and here cannot find the enjoyment and contentment required to find sufficient meaning and purpose (and even sufficient functionality) in maintenance of existing orders alone.

An avenue which some find meaning and purpose is to explicitly name social problems and prescribe solutions for them. This may or may not be a realistic source of meaning and purpose for me. It requires energy. So does ideation and administration of social solutions – the ultimate purpose and meaning. Instead, I am at the lower level of naming psychological and personal problems. Depression, ADHD, boredom. I know these are not really the root of my lack of

meaning, however. It is society and environment not matching my personal needs right now.

(later edit 11/1/19: I didn't want to sound entitled. I just wrote exactly how I felt the truth was. The diagnosis, I felt, wasn't anything intrinsic about me; I could be fine, with help/societal adjustment. That's what a diagnosis is supposed to allow you to get, but the kinds of help available felt insufficient at that moment)

House warming #2 4/5

Another sober house party. Claimed a couch position and stuck to it. Weekend Immendorf watched by people sat under the house on paver floor or the few other couches, or standing round the back. I watched the bits of coloured light from the disco light, red and blue, I think, move around in patterns while the electro business by the two creative, eccentric men graced my ears pleasantly.

Star Slushy (Slow Slushy, as named on facebook event page?) were surprisingly theatrical and exciting given the lack of Tempest. Alternating frontpersons, alternating instruments, masked face thrust in faces of squealing audience, anthemic song led by masked male, Cocteau Twins esque song led by pot or mortar and pestle wielding female, the talented Timmy (Des Threts, memorable Frakreactor solo) filling in for Tempest on drums, fun times. This is a subgroup of the Brisbane Independent Underground Music apparently not so much downcast in recent days, having their own lives, and also Masquerade Glitter Man's baby who was present at the show with smiles, sculling the bottle of milk front row like an adult human would take a long drag from a beer bottle. Bek Hlodic (the artist) behind me said of the whole thing, "that was so good I want to die!!"

Didn't catch the other earlier acts. Talked to a few people on the couch, mainly. Handed some zines out. Went to the toilet and awkwardly said hi to people seated on upstairs couches, including Angelique who I had spoken to on messenger earlier. Walked down to the Buddha Birth Day Festival in Southbank. Peaceful and aesthetically pleasing. Quiet people. Got a discounted bubble tea, watermelon juice and some mock meat

probably made from gluten. Glances at some posters to do with buddhist philosophy, and a few books and trinkets.

Came home and peeked through the Queenslander wooden boards at a jam happening. Some weird n cool enough stuff.

Went home. Went to bed.

Memorial for Caroline Milne, Phase 4, 5/5/18

Caroline was the lady who had hosted a few of the first ever shows I went to, and the first house show I went to when I knew barely anybody. I had spoken to Mark Spinks on facebook, seeing he had tagged a bunch of people in a post about having a show on the Gold Coast. Living on the Gold Coast, and being quite isolated, I contacted Mark and expressed enthusiasm for starting something on the Gold Coast. I had a real agenda there, pathetically, to import the good music from Brisbane but not knowing how this business of putting on shows and bringing bands here and getting people to come worked. I was basically a dorky uni student who listened to Royal Headache alone trying to get her ex boyfriend to like her music. I did not want to complain, but wanted to get into true DIY spirit somehow to do something for myself.

Lucky for me, Caroline had decided to do something with the lovely house of her ex-husband and put up a whole bunch of bands, some neighbours and friends, and me the little stranger, for two different nights. I remember arriving at around twilight, on the hill next to the Terranora Inlet in my little old car, driving from the north of the Gold Coast all by myself with a carton of Hahn Superdry. It was all subtropical and magical, done up with fairy lights and little candles for mozzie repellent, dip and crackers, and incessantly thoughtful of Caroline, even little mozzie repellent armbands which she handed out. Mark said to everybody, "Everyone, this is Katy, she's new, be really nice to her". "There's beer, if you drink beer, here's the esky" and everything to make me feel at home.

This was a big deal for me and I didn't see the extent of how rare these kind of shows are by my current Brisbane house show standards. The

generosity, the careful hosting, and getting to know everybody at a time when they were mourning two friends – Ben Paskins (artist and Time Machine partner in Nambour) and Bek Moore (a social worker, Clag vocalist).

Such was and is my vulnerability in this group of strange, beautiful new friends that I am now memorialising Caroline memorialising Bek Moore. Caroline told me that Bek was the first (or one of the first) people to really listen and treat her as a person in her own right rather than this appendage of Mark. That always stuck with me.

Surrounded by her five or so cats around the kitchen, and her lovely expressive, often cat themes décor, I learned she went to Japan to do charity work. She had a lot of passions and a rich history before taking interest in music people. Also, she played in Two Chevrons, despite her nerves. I thought she did fine. Also, she had a really nice smile whenever you'd say hello.

Caroline didn't have a funeral, just a show at Phase 4 with Mark and their friends. Mark did what he did good – play music that Caroline liked. Gravel Samwidge played. A friend of theirs played. A few tears around but not a terrible glum occasion. Spare a thought for Caroline.

Blutes

Afterwards there was a free show at Blutes, which is a homely bar in Brunno St Mall with some punk bands with the kinds of punks that have brightly coloured hair and NOFX patches and sing about getting fuck'd up. It was fun, clean, poppy sounding music and they were probably all tough union members. I sat near the gaming console (forget which one it was) and read The Music (just to stay in touch with competitors). Then went to RG's to use their bathroom, tried to buy a spinach and feta roll at Night Owl, beaten up eftpos card didn't work, and finally found friends out the back in the smoking area.

There was a dude there who was being really shitty and abusive to somebody and it was awkward. We were really quiet and he went away

and the lady who was sitting with us (ahh what was her name?) said “sorry guys”.

The tables had heaps of dicks and stuff about all the vulgarities you could imagine. Sometimes the “F U LOL” crass environment has a down to earth charm, other times you have to wonder how bad it gets when there’s actual drama and abuse when this stuff is the punk rawk norm.

Anyhow, I liked the people I met and got to feel a little bit like I was back to normal, meeting strangers at a bar, hanging out with friends who were drinking and smoking. I got half a beer and I think, a gin and something given to me while at that outside table. Such small consumption, but when you’re used to none, you really get to savour that slightly fucked, relaxed, sociable, warm feeling.

Drove three friends back to my/our place where they partied on and I made spaghetti. I thought one friend was done with drinking for the weekend, and I was gonna do a big possibly life saving favour by taking him home (it was Sunday night and he had vomited into a pot) but nope, he wanted to stay on. Amazing with what the body can put up with.

I didn’t watch the movies with all of em cause I’m pretty boring n went to bed early.

Ah well, had a reasonably eventful evening. Got to talk to a nurse at Blutes, having a conversation about the health system which would’ve felt really profound and stuff on ritalin, like I was helping save the world by hearing about this health machine that spits you out at the end telling you to make an appointment when you might not have credit, or you might be too anxious. Maybe it was meaningful, because she got to vent and I got to write about it here and feel good that I met a cool person.

It was also interesting and charming to see the dude who I think ran the place, going around and being warm and affectionate to all the people around. Heard he was the guy who ran the Underdog.

Anyhow, I miss ritalin and booze a lot. But it’s not the end of the world without it.

How to relax and get loose – while limiting the booze

Have you decided to, or been forced into, quitting or severely limiting your booze intake? No worries, because we’ve had plenty of time to figure out ways to help not avoid social situations where there will be lots of drinking. Save your money and some sanity with these great tips!

1. Wear relaxed, loose-fitted clothing such as track pants or baggy jeans, or leggings
2. Do some stretches before leaving the house instead of pre-drinks.
3. Have a daily regimen for being calm and carry that calmness over to the social situation. For example, sleep a lot.
4. Take fish oil (4/day) or a desired supplement which has antidepressant and antianxiety properties according to some research. Ginseng, cups of tea, ginkgo, ashwaganda, magnesium chelate, zinc, drops of lavender oil on your skin – whatever is the right prescription for your mood.
5. Remind yourself that you are here because you like people and want to see what they are up to. It is good to see creative works and to hear what has been going on in people’s lives because it helps to keep your own life in perspective and you can contribute your bit to society.

6. Find a beer-cebo, or a placebo drink. This is most preferably water. It's free and it tastes good. It's not a real placebo, but you can pretend it is.

7. Don't feel like you have to talk to anybody. Actually, feel free to forget number 5, if you don't feel that way. Instead, you can remind yourself that you can still remain interested in people while disliking or feeling indifferent to whatever is going on while you have the lens of somebody who is sober.

8. Find somewhere to sit and close your eyes. This is a way to remind yourself that you feel safe and calm and can extract yourself from the situation without staying home for a whole night.

9. Remember that you are in control more than the people around you and can empathise with the hospitality stuff that you usually take for granted. You are respectable. You have more power over your own life by perceiving the chaos from a stable vantage point. People who cannot drink due to health problems thank you for helping to open up space for them to be normal, too.

10. Rock yourself back and forth or from side to side. Then go lie down. Rock n' roll.

There you have it. How to pass the time on a Friday or Saturday at a drinky occasion.

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